

Peterson Institute for International Economics

The state of the transatlantic security partnership

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[00:00:20.27] - Nicolas Véron

Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. I'm Nicolas Véron. It's my pleasure to introduce this new session of our series What Now, Europe? at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, and we're very honored today to have as guest Oana Lungescu. Oana, you grew up in and studied in Bucharest, Romania. You received a master's degree in English and Spanish studies in 1981. You started a career as an English teacher in a small mountain town, I think. But then, you know, life is not easy in 1980s Romania, so you had some run-ins with the Securitate, the secret police of the Ceaușescu regime, and long story short, you moved to Germany in 1985. You are now a German citizen, Child of Europe, as you said, a poetry collection of poetry that you translated actually from Romanian to English. You've worked for a long time at the BBC, for 25 years. You were at the BBC's Romanian section, Then at the World Service, you were the correspondent in Brussels, in Berlin, and you've reported from many other places. In 2010, you became the spokesperson for NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, where you served almost 13 years under 2 Secretaries General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen and Jens Stoltenberg.

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I'm not good at pronouncing Scandinavian names. But you were the first woman, the first journalist, the first person from the Soviet bloc as a spokesperson for NATO, and also the longest serving ever so far. So, that's quite a few records. After you left NATO in '23, you became a distinguished fellow at the Royal United— sorry, Services Institute. Sorry, I'm not good at— Royal Services Institute. Acronym is RUSI, Royal United Services Institute, in London. And you're also a senior advisor to the European Policy Center in Brussels. You were involved in the boards and advisory boards of various other nonprofits, including in the Baltics. As I said, you're a child of Europe. How is the transatlantic security partnership doing?

[00:02:40.04] - Oana Lungescu

It's still there. That's what matters. Hello, everybody. And hello, Nicolas. Thank you for that very extensive Thank you for the introduction. The Transatlantic Security Partnership, which started formally 77 years ago with the formation of NATO, I think, is probably facing an unprecedented crisis of trust, an erosion of trust across the Atlantic to a level that we've not seen before, despite all the crises that we've seen in NATO's history. However, NATO has not been broken and remains the main pillar of transatlantic security, ultimately because both Europe and North America need each other, and together Europe and North America represent 50% of the world's economic and military might, and that's quite something in the dangerous world that we live in.

[00:03:44.11] - Nicolas Véron

So, you've set the scene. There's a lot to take from there. Maybe I'll go a bit obliquely. Yesterday, Ursula von der Leyen gave the State of the European Union speech, which is a kind of European Union copycat exercise of the American State of the Union. Today, Mark Carney spoke in the European Parliament. So, we're seeing a lot of rhetoric around a slightly different North Atlantic relationship between the European Union and Canada. How does that interact with the EU-US relationship? Is it correct to see the transatlantic partnership as a kind of, you know, game between maybe 4 main actors: United States, Canada, UK, EU? How— probably not correct, I forgot Turkey. What's your mental map and how has it evolved in recent times?

[00:04:49.08] - Oana Lungescu

I think our transatlantic mental map, of course, is big enough to include a whole network of relationships, partnerships, coalitions of the willing, and alliances on different specific areas from critical minerals to defense. I think it was really interesting watching the 2 speeches yesterday in Strasbourg, first President von der Leyen, and today the Prime Minister of Canada, Mark Carney. Of course, 23 European countries are part of both NATO and the EU. Canada, is part of NATO, an important part of NATO. So, these are countries that have known each other for many, many decades in many different ways. But clearly, there is a sort of Trump effect, even if the one name that was not mentioned by either President von der Leyen or Prime Minister Carney was Donald Trump. Nobody spoke of the American president directly. Clearly, the fact that both Canada and the EU have tense trade relations and political relations in many ways with the second Trump administration is also pushing them closer together. So, if anything, there is a sort of paradoxical Trump effect, instead of undermining the relations between these 2 important, you know, European, the European Union and Canada, an important North American partner, they are being brought together.

[00:06:45.22]

How exactly, it remains to be seen, because I think many, including myself, I don't know about you, were surprised yesterday to hear President von der Leyen talking about Canada becoming the first associate member of the European Union, because we know very well that such a term, such a concept doesn't actually exist in EU treaties. And that when the German Chancellor Olaf Scholz suggested something like that in— sorry, Friedrich Merz rather— suggested something like that for Ukraine earlier this year, Both many EU members and Ukraine itself turned it down. So, we'll have to see how this partnership will be called. Prime Minister Kani welcomed the ambition expressed by President von der Leyen, but preferred to speak about an alliance for the future.

[00:07:54.16] - Nicolas Véron

Yeah, and obviously membership denotes an asymmetric relationship between Canada and the EU. Maybe Carney wants something more symmetrical. Conversely, Ukraine is a European country, Canada is not. So that's a different relationship in terms of possible full membership of the EU. So there are many things to untangle. And as you said, it's the beginning of a journey. Let me come back to a word, a different word that you have used, which is coalition of the willing. So those of us with memories of the early 2000s remember it in the context of the first Bush administration and the invasion of Iraq. What does the expression actually mean right now? What does it code for?

[00:08:41.16] - Oana Lungescu

We've seen in the last year or so 2 different coalitions of the willing emerging in and around Europe with other partners. One, for Ukraine in the event of some sort of a settlement in Ukraine, and the other one around reopening the Gulf of Hormuz. Both of them outside both of NATO and the European Union, so which are much more flexible structure and in principle a faster ability to take decisions. However, none of them has actually been active on the ground for various reasons, even though the Coalition of the Willing for Ukraine has some military planning capabilities. So, their role until now, I would say, for both of these coalitions of the willing, has been to show the willingness of the partners of the United States to play their role in different ways, either in Ukraine or in the Middle East, and by that doing, create an area of political conversation and providing political leverage in their relationship with the US. So, It's been— the coalitions of the willing have been more about dealing with the US and showing we have something to offer, we're willing to be part of this effort on terms that are acceptable to ourselves, rather than actually ending up in any concrete action on the ground.

[00:10:33.03] - Nicolas Véron

So the US is a member of neither coalitions of the willing that you mentioned, the one for Ukraine, the one for Hormuz. As you said, there is an element of orientation towards the US and dialogue with the US in both situations, I guess, in very different ways. But Ukraine indeed is the kind of elephant in the room when we talk about the transatlantic security partnership at this point, because even though the US is at war on many fronts, it's not at war in America, but there is a war in Europe. and which is, of course, atrocious. So the fact that the— well, maybe let me ask the question this way. How is the US involved at this point in the war in Ukraine? How would you summarize the current state of US involvement at this point of the second Trump administration?

[00:11:33.17] - Oana Lungescu

The US, of course, has played a very important role in supporting Ukraine. Since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and of course, in the precedent years, providing absolutely key capabilities for Ukraine's defense and Ukraine's ultimate survival. Under the second Trump administration, there's been a shift in that practically all military and financial help right now for Ukraine is coming from the Europeans. That's been part of the overall burden shifting in the transatlantic partnership, with the Europeans taking a greater lead, both for the conventional defense of Europe in general, but also for the support of Ukraine. However, there are— a certain set of key capabilities, for instance, Patriot interceptors, which only the United States can provide. And therefore, a certain scheme was created by NATO through Secretary General Mark Rutte. It was his idea to find a way to use European money to fund American equipment for Ukraine. And that's something that's already delivered very significantly with, I think, around \$40 billion so far, including a package of \$10 billion just these days, including interestingly with funding from the European Union. And that also shows NATO and the EU working together with the United States to find ways to support Ukraine, even at a time when the current Trump administration is unwilling to support Ukraine directly through financing or by gifting military equipment.

[00:13:51.11] - Nicolas Véron

So you mentioned the Patriots, PAC-3 interceptors, or whatever the acronyms are. Obviously, they're very critical at this moment of the war between Russia and Ukraine. Are any being delivered, or is it over? What's the current situation?

[00:14:10.04] - Oana Lungescu

The people I speak to in NATO assure me that they are being delivered. Perhaps sometimes more discreetly, because of course, some of these interceptors are also important for the

defense of many countries in Europe who feel threatened by Russia's aggression. However, NATO Allies have found ways to support Ukraine regularly, including with Patriot interceptors. Because the reality is that even though there are different European-made systems, air and missile defense systems, which are also quite effective, they are not as effective as the Patriots, for instance, when it comes to Russia's hypersonic missiles. So, there has to be cooperation in providing those to Ukraine, especially now with winter coming, the 5th year of Russia's aggression. The reality is, however, that we don't have enough of this type of interceptors either in Europe or indeed in the United States, because of course quite a lot of kit has been expended in America's war in Iran, and in helping America's partners in the Middle East. So there is an issue that all of us have, not just in supporting Ukraine, but also in replenishing stockpiles across NATO.

[00:15:55.13] - Nicolas Véron

Obviously, the Ukrainian view is that a lot of those were wasted in the Middle East compared to their more parsimonious use, but I don't have the military knowledge to assess that. Do you think the Ukrainians are right?

[00:16:09.25] - Oana Lungescu

Look, I think obviously the war in Iran is a war of choice for the United States, whereas the war in Ukraine is a war of aggression by Russia, and Ukraine is defending itself and has been doing so very bravely and very capably. For 5 years. So, I think, obviously, this is a serious issue, which is also important for the United States when it comes to, you know, the possibility of a war in another theater, in the Indo-Pacific. So, overall, we see insufficient production and insufficient scaling up. Of these types of key capabilities, which can also, of course, play an absolutely vital role in allowing Ukraine to survive this winter and to emerge victorious from this war, which is a war for its self-defense, but it's also a way in which Ukraine is helping defend the rest of Europe. It's on the frontline of Russia's aggression in Europe.

[00:17:29.07] - Nicolas Véron

So one more question from me about Patriots, and sorry for spending a lot of time on them, but obviously they're critically important in the context for the reasons you just mentioned. Something I struggle with when reading the news, and again, not my area of expertise, and maybe, I mean, I of course don't want you to disclose things that would be not in the public domain. But in your understanding, you referred to European countries being discreet, finding ways to give some of their stockpiles of Patriot interceptors to Ukraine in recent weeks and

months. Is there any evidence of a flow of those things across the Atlantic? So is the US at this point transferring some of those capabilities to Europe, or had that completely dried up?

[00:18:18.27] - Oana Lungescu

Again, my understanding is that the United States continues to honor the agreement that it's made with NATO, and that NATO, NATO European Allies and Canada put together packages of funding, and the United States provides the equipment needed for Ukraine. It may not always be at the fast pace that is required or in the vast quantities that are required, but that support continues. And I think that is, that is a positive, that is a positive element. But yes, I agree that these things are very urgent, and there's a lot of discussion and a lot of public discussion. And that's where I would say that sometimes we talk too much about what we're willing to provide and what we're not willing to provide, how many, when, what, where. And I think especially now it could be more, you know, I think we should also be a bit more cautious about how much, how public we are about what can be provided or not provided. And you remember all the discussions, first about tanks, then about Taurus ammunition. There's been a lot of public discussion, and of course, our countries are democracies, so the public wants to know.

[00:19:58.03]

But this is also a war where the adversary has a vote. So let's not give too much ammunition, too much of our scarce ammunition to the enemy.

[00:20:13.16] - Nicolas Véron

Okay, so I will keep asking questions, but you just write—

[00:20:16.29] - Oana Lungescu

You're welcome, of course.

[00:20:18.12] - Nicolas Véron

How cautious you are entitled to being in answering or not answering mine. Let's move to the other element of critical support that the US still provides to Ukraine and therefore to transatlantic security, because Ukraine's fight, as you said, is Europe's security at this point. Intelligence sharing. There have been, of course, this is an even less transparent area than delivering Patriot interceptors. But do you have something you can share with us of your assessment of how critical this is, whether it has become more or less critical since the beginning of the war? There have been reports, including pronouncements by some European

politicians, my own President Macron has been one of them, that, you know, There is a capability to do without the US in some of those things. Where are we in your assessment? Is there, again, anything you feel comfortable sharing?

[00:21:20.06] - Oana Lungescu

I'm no longer at NATO, so obviously, I'm not in on a lot of the conversations. But I think intelligence has been absolutely key from the start, from even before Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. And I remember being at NATO at the time and hearing the first briefings from the then US Director of National Intelligence, Avril Haines, who came to Brussels specifically to warn NATO allies and also to brief countries in the EU about Russia's real plans and intentions of conquering the whole of Ukraine, taking Kyiv in a couple of days, and eliminating the democratic government of Ukraine. And so, I think the US, together with the UK and other allies at the time, had very good intelligence, but also took the unprecedented decision to share so much. That had not happened in the past, despite, you know, the ongoing exchanges of intelligence within NATO in particular. But at that level, that was unprecedented. And a lot of that intelligence was also shared with Ukraine. However, what we saw was that some European allies in particular at that time, even though they had the same level of information, the same intelligence was provided to them through NATO, had different analysis of the intelligence, because they felt, in particular France and Germany at that time,

[00:23:08.08] - Nicolas Véron

And Ukraine.

[00:23:10.28] - Oana Lungescu

And Ukraine in a different position, that it was not reasonable for Putin to invade Ukraine. It made no sense. But of course, you know, the way that, you know, we see being reasonable and the way Putin sees reasonableness are two different things. Ukraine, of course, was in a different position, situation because it also wanted to avoid creating panic among its population or having a massive outflow of foreign investment. So, again, I would say that a lot of that intelligence was shared, not just behind closed doors, but publicly, because together, obviously, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the time, together with US and UK leaders, and leaders in Central and Eastern Europe, we were very clear about what Russia was planning to do. And in order to prepare our publics and to create the base for unity in supporting Ukraine and in increasing our own defense investments. And I think that played— intelligence and this strategic disclosure of intelligence played a really important role at the time.

[00:24:38.26] - Nicolas Véron

You were in the middle of all— sorry, go ahead.

[00:24:42.20] - Oana Lungescu

Yeah.

[00:24:42.27] - Nicolas Véron

You were in the middle of all this at the time. You were in the room where it happened. Did you expect Kyiv to fall in 3 days? How were your reactions to the developments of the initial phases of the full-scale invasion?

[00:24:58.05] - Oana Lungescu

Well, I can tell you that when I first heard that US briefing by Avril Haines, I felt like a punch in the stomach, because it was like the worst possible insight we could get. And yeah, I think it was hard for us to know what to expect, but ultimately, there was a lot of fear that, yes, Ukraine could fall in the onslaught of, you know, Russia's aggression. That did not happen. And that is, of course, a tribute to the courage of Ukrainians, to their resilience, to their ability to innovate. However, it also means that we need to continue that support because it's now more important than ever. They can't just rely on their courage. We can't just say we wish you well. We need to urgently step up our support, including in the intelligence domain, which of course is key when it comes, for instance, to deep strikes against Russian capabilities, because of course it's much more effective if you don't just shoot the arrows, but you shoot the archer. So you don't just fight every drone and try to defend or bring down every drone, every missile, but you actually go to the source of Russia's military-industrial complex that is churning out and targeting.

[00:26:55.11]

all these weapons towards Ukrainian civilians and Ukrainian infrastructure.

[00:27:01.20] - Nicolas Véron

So, if I heard you correctly on this, what your assessment is that, yes, there is intelligence sharing going on, but there could be more, right?

[00:27:11.18] - Oana Lungescu

I think there could always be more. And of course, there is always, and we've seen that in the past, there is a certain reluctance when it comes to deep precision strikes, in particular. But Ukraine has shown that it can be extremely effective in conducting those. But it needs the capabilities and indeed the intelligence to make sure that it selects the right targets according to international law.

[00:27:47.04] - Nicolas Véron

So, of course, Ukraine is the main theater of operations viewed from a European perspective. I'm not sure it's the same view from Washington, but that's certainly a big important part of the transatlantic partnership. Let's move a little bit around the map. And let's talk about Turkey, or Türkiye, as it now wants to be called. Where is it in your mental map? Obviously, it's part of NATO. So the official answer is it's part of NATO, it's an ally. The reality is very different, more complicated. Of course, Türkiye is part of NATO and is doing its job there, but has many different interests and affiliations and postures. Where do you see it? Is it even part of the transatlantic security partnership? What's your view?

[00:28:39.25] - Oana Lungescu

Yeah, I think Türkiye is very much part of the transatlantic security partnership. And is very important to the defense of Europe. The European Union, as it stands, is not in a position to defend Europe. It needs, if you look at the, not just the mental map, but the real geographical map, it needs the United Kingdom, it needs Iceland, it needs Norway. It needs Türkiye, and of course, Canada and the United States. I mean, this is all part of the defensive system, of the way you can defend Europe. You cannot just imagine the countries that are now within the EU, even though, of course, many of them are also part of NATO, just being able to do that on their own. So, that's why it's important to look at the capabilities, but also the regional concerns that these countries bring. And as you know, NATO's latest Summit this year took place in Ankara in July, and it was an opportunity for Türkiye to show that it is a regional convener, it's a regional power, but it also has a very important industrial defense base, producing a lot of innovative equipment, not least drones, but also frigates and others.

[00:30:29.02]

And it's, was interestingly, it's also one of the countries that, I mean, President Erdoğan was specifically mentioned by President Trump at the time as being the reason why he decided to go to the summit. I'm sure that there were other reasons as well, but I think personal relationships also play a role in alliances.

[00:30:55.26] - Nicolas Véron

I'm not sure if it's personal. Is that good or bad news?

[00:31:01.24] - Oana Lungescu

Look, I think in NATO, as elsewhere, but I think particularly in NATO, ultimately what matters is security and defense. So, NATO, whether you like it or not, doesn't have the same procedures as the EU has, for instance, to call a member to account when it comes to respect of press freedom or human rights or LGBTQ+ rights. The alliance is about defending each other, and there Türkiye has an important role to play, and I think that was really highlighted at the summit. And it was also interesting that, of course, EU leaders, President Costa and President von der Leyen, were invited to the NATO summit, but they also had a long discussion with President Erdoğan, and they highlighted the strategic importance of Türkiye for Europe's defense, both when it comes to defense, but also, of course, when it comes to migration.

[00:32:17.29] - Nicolas Véron

Right. You mentioned something which is very important and interesting. So you said the EU cannot defend itself without its NATO allies. There was an interesting debate in the last, I think, months between Mark Rutte and Alexander Stubb, so the current Secretary General of NATO and the President of Finland, on this exact question. So I remember when Alexander Stubb came to Washington at the Brookings Institution a couple of months ago, he actually highlighted his disagreement with Mark Rutte on this. So in a way, gave us what appears to be the current NATO Secretary General's position, that Europe cannot defend itself without its NATO allies. Obviously, as you mentioned yourself, there was also an expectation that Ukraine could not defend itself against a Russian full-scale invasion. Could you elaborate a little bit on this judgment? If Russia was, as sadly, is possible, to attack the EU directly, if some of its NATO allies, including the US— I think that's implausible for Canada and the UK, but who knows— were to not be helpful to the EU in those circumstances. Are you actually confident that the EU would collapse? What would happen?

[00:33:41.14] - Oana Lungescu

I think we need to make a distinction between the EU and Europe. You know, the EU is not Europe, and Europe is not the EU. I mean, obviously, the European Union—

[00:33:51.28] - Nicolas Véron

I just paraphrased your pronouncement about the EU not being able to defend itself.

[00:33:56.11] - Oana Lungescu

Yeah, but I'm talking about Europe as a continent. But I think it's— what is really important, and I think that's been a trend for the last few years, is increased cooperation between NATO and the European Union when it comes to defense in particular, in a way that is becoming a bit more pragmatic and less perhaps ideological or even, you know, theological as it was at certain points in history. So, I think there's a sort of clear idea that NATO sets military standards, it also sets the military requirements for NATO Allies, 23 of whom are also EU member states. And it develops the defense plans from which these specific capability requirements flow. While the European Union plays an absolutely key role in helping European countries fulfill those requirements and produce, hopefully increasingly together, the capabilities that European countries need in order to defend themselves. At the same time, there is this trend towards what is known as NATO 3.0, a concept that was reinforced by the Ankara Summit this summer. And what's NATO 3.0? NATO 1.0 during the Cold War was focused on collective defense against the Soviet Union, a very clear adversary. NATO 2.0 after the end of the Cold War focused on opening up, welcoming new members, new allies, and also new partners.

[00:36:04.02]

At the time, that also included Russia, and also went out-of-area in expeditionary missions, in particular Afghanistan, but also the missions in the Baltics. And NATO is still there, for instance, in Kosovo. NATO 3.0 is a rebalanced NATO, because both NATO 1.0 and NATO 2.0 basically depended very heavily on the United States taking the lion's share of the security burden. Now, in NATO 3.0, the idea is that we don't just have burden sharing, but the burden shifting, with Europe, Europeans taking the lead role for the conventional defense of the continent, but with the United States still playing a role, including in key capabilities and in providing the nuclear umbrella. So this is what we're seeing now. It's something that in effect has started since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, with NATO's decisions to first aim towards investing 2% of GDP on defense, then last year, 5% of GDP on defense, and with a very significant progress we've now seen in defense spending across Europe. Basically, it's been in 2025, it's been an increase of 20%, which is of course historic. But this is the process that we are now seeing so that at one point, of course, Europeans should be in a much better position to defend the continent, as it's only normal that we should.

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But I think we also need to be aware that even though, of course, countries that could come under attack, of course, they will defend themselves, and allies would come to their support, but

we would still need, as we do today, some key capabilities that the United States provides. And that's why I think, There is the talk in Europe, I would say, is a bit— with the United States is a bit like the discussion about China. It's about de-risking, not decoupling.

[00:38:32.27] - Nicolas Véron

Right.

[00:38:33.04] - Oana Lungescu

Nobody wants to decouple from the United States. It would not be smart. It would not make sense for either of us. But I think especially with the second Trump administration, there is talk about, you know, how can we do much more for ourselves much faster? So that we rely less on the United States.

[00:38:54.29] - Nicolas Véron

With the United States as with China. Let's pivot back to Washington, DC. We've talked a lot about the perceptions and developments in Europe, but what's happening in Washington, DC? Of course, I won't ask you to enter the head of President Donald Trump. None of us can do that. But what's your read of, you know, Whatever can be said beyond the tweeting or social media posting of the president, of the stance of the current administration towards NATO, is there anything interesting or information-rich that can be said about it? Or is it all just random because of the leadership?

[00:39:37.14] - Oana Lungescu

I think, you know, what I'm watching right now is something that's known as the US Force Posture Review, which is ongoing roughly until the end of this year. And this is a process that, in effect, has already started with some fairly random reductions, cuts in US troops in places like Romania and Germany with— and Poland. But there is now, let's say, a more structured approach, which includes a questionnaire to Allies and consultations with Allies at NATO, which have taken place recently. So, and I think it's absolutely normal that the United States should review its posture, not least because, of course, everybody is considering the possibility of what's known as a two-theatre war, in which, for instance, if China made an aggressive move towards Taiwan, President Xi may also ask Putin to distract the Europeans and to distract NATO in the Euro-Atlantic theater. So, clearly, the Indo-Pacific and the Euro-Atlantic are theaters that are interlinked, and China, of course, is watching very closely what Russia is doing, is helping Russia, and is watching events in Ukraine very closely. But resources are not

infinite, so it's understandable that the United States would consider what they would need in each theater in this type of situation.

[00:41:39.15]

So, that's something that is ongoing. Discussions have been fairly constructive, I understand, until now, but of course, there will be options from the Pentagon, but ultimately, the person who will take the decisions will be President Trump. And there is a risk that some of these reviews and reappraisals will be done not on the basis of a grand strategy, but more of psychology or indeed loyalty, because we've also seen that in the questionnaire submitted to the Pentagon, by the Pentagon to NATO Allies, some of the questions actually didn't have to do with with strategy. It was more like, do you support or are you acquiring equipment from US firms? Have you shown public support for US initiatives in the Middle East and in the Western Hemisphere? So, we'll have to see how all these angles play. But it's also important to mention that the US Congress has made clear that it would not want the administration to go below a threshold of 76,000 troops in Europe without close consultations, both with Congress itself and with NATO allies. So there, the US Congress does also have an important role to play. So this dynamic will be interesting to watch, not least after the midterms.

[00:43:21.26] - Nicolas Véron

Inside the administration, who do you see as important leaders to watch other than the president, if any?

[00:43:29.14] - Oana Lungescu

When it comes to NATO, certainly NATO leaders have to discuss and engage with the whole of the administration. And that's always been the case during the first Trump administration, when I was there, during the Biden administration, during the Obama administration. And that applies not just to the United States, but to all NATO Allies. I mean, NATO Secretary General cannot afford to just deal with one or two people. You know, there is a much broader outreach and exchange. So, I would say, obviously, NATO leadership needs to deal both with the Pentagon, with the State Department.

[00:44:11.02] - Nicolas Véron

Right.

[00:44:11.07] - Oana Lungescu

The NSC, in a way, the NSC, of course, is the same as the State Department, And of course, with the president himself. And that's where I think, despite the criticism that we've seen of Mark Rutte, I think he is somebody who has maintained and has been able to maintain that channel of communications with the president, which remains indispensable for a NATO leader and also buys time. for NATO Allies to do their homework, both when it comes to defense investment, but also in generating the real capabilities that we need for the support of Ukraine and for defense of the rest of Europe.

[00:44:59.27] - Nicolas Véron

Oana Lungescu, thank you so much. This was a lot of territory being covered, transatlantic mostly territory. Thanks for being with us today. Next month, we'll have a session on a different topic, also European topic about anti-money laundering and the new agencies, the anti-money laundering authorities that the European Union has set up with Raluca Pruna of the European Commission. Thanks to everybody for participating and engaging today, and see you soon. Have a great rest of your day.

[00:45:31.18] - Oana Lungescu

Thank you so much. Thank you, Nicolas. Thank you to everybody involved and those out there listening and watching.